



NEWS RELEASE

December 13, 2002

Yuma Agents seize over 1,000 pounds of marijuana in Wellton Area

Border Patrol Agents from the Yuma Sector seized approximately 1,163 pounds of marijuana early this morning in the Wellton Station area of responsibility. The marijuana was valued at \$930,584.00. The smuggler was also arrested after he jumped from his vehicle while moving at approximately 40 miles per hour.

At 2:30 a.m., agents from the Wellton Station observed a vehicle in the desert southwest of Gila Bend. The agents staged in the area in order to intercept the suspect vehicle by use of spike strips. The vehicle, a white Chevrolet pickup, veered further to the east and avoided the spike strips. The agents followed the vehicle, operating their emergency lights in an attempt to stop the vehicle. The vehicle exited the desert and traveled north on Palomas road, a farming area near Gila Bend. The agents were able to locate the vehicle in the area, but the driver refused to stop. The suspect driver then opened the driver-side door and jumped out of the vehicle while it was still moving. The suspect injured himself severely when he impacted the hard-packed dirt road. The vehicle continued driverless for an additional 50 yards before hitting an embankment and flipping over.

The agents responded immediately. One agent took care of the suspect while the others went toward the wrecked vehicle. The suspect received facial and head injuries when he impacted the road. He was transported to Phoenix for treatment under the custody of the Drug Enforcement Administration. The agents inspected the vehicle and discovered 70 packages wrapped in cellophane. The contents of the packages tested positive for marijuana.

Custody of the marijuana and the vehicle was transferred to the Drug Enforcement Administration for further investigation.

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